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Contact: Erica Daughtrey
201-222-2828

Congressman Sires Supports Bill to Increase Security at High Risk Chemical Plants

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Sires spoke in favor of H.R. 2868, the Chemical and Water Security Act of 2009, and voted for the bill today, which passed the house by a vote of 230 to 193. House Committees on Homeland Security, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Energy and Water worked to draft the comprehensive legislation that reauthorizes and strengthens the Department of Homeland Security's Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards. It also expands the current security efforts by giving the Environmental Protection Agency the authority to create a risk-based program for the country's drinking water and wastewater facilities.

"This legislation improves our security by requiring facilities that use dangerous chemicals to examine using inherently safer technologies when possible. In some cases, the implementation of safer technologies would be required," said Sires. He added, "On the morning of September 11th, we all witnessed the destructive capabilities of terrorism. I believe we must do everything in our power to address the known threats, so we can reduce our risks and prevent future catastrophes. The safety of our communities depends on the security measures taken at these facilities."

The legislation allows improves compliance by allowing citizens to bring suit against the Secretary of Homeland Security for failure to perform duties such as promulgating regulations, and against federal facilities for failure to comply with orders issued by the Department of

Homeland Security.

“Increased security measures should not be viewed as a burden, but as an opportunity to reduce threats by promoting best practices. This legislation is skillfully designed to increase our security without jeopardizing facility services,” added Sires.

The Chemical and Water Security Act now awaits consideration in the Senate.

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